

# *fast* FACTS...

April 2003

*about Sedgwick County Government*



## *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)*

### What is SARS?

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness of unknown cause that has recently been reported in a number of countries.

### What are the symptoms of SARS?

- A fever greater than 100.4 F
- Headache
- Overall feeling of discomfort
- Body aches
- Trouble breathing
- Dry cough

### How does SARS spread?

Health experts believe that SARS is spread by close contact between people. SARS is most likely spread when someone infected with the disease coughs droplets into the air and someone else breathes them in. It is also possible that SARS can be spread more broadly through the air or from touching objects that have become contaminated.

### Who is most at risk for contracting SARS?

Cases appear to primarily involve health care workers caring for patients and close family contacts. Examples of close contact include having cared for, lived with, or had direct contact with respiratory secretions and body fluids of people with SARS.

### What if I think I have SARS?

If you are ill with fever accompanied by cough or difficulty breathing, you should consult a health care provider. To help your health care provider make a diagnosis, tell them about any recent travel to regions where cases of SARS have been reported and whether you were in contact with someone who had these symptoms. You should also be sure to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If possible, wear a surgical mask to reduce the number of droplets coughed into the air.

### For More Information:

You can find more information on SARS on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/faq.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/faq.htm)

For questions about SARS or other health topics, contact the Sedgwick County Health Department at 660-7300

### Has SARS been reported in Sedgwick County?

Yes, as of this time there have been two suspected cases of SARS in Sedgwick County. Both people have been determined not to have SARS.

### Is there any reason to think SARS is related to terrorism?

Information currently available about SARS indicates that people who appear to be most at risk are either health care workers taking care of sick people or family members of those who are infected. That pattern of transmission is what would typically be expected in a contagious respiratory or flu-like illness.

### How can I get more information?

For more information, call the Sedgwick County Health Department Epidemiologist on Call at 660-7392 or by email at [diseasereport@sedgwick.gov](mailto:diseasereport@sedgwick.gov).

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